

## **POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION DISGUISED AS DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION TRAINING IN VERMONT STATE GOVERNMENT**

I have been employed by the State of Vermont for seven years. Throughout my career working for the state, I have received consistently outstanding evaluations and high praise from my supervisors. I even was awarded employee of the year in 2015.

Now, however, my job is in jeopardy. I have been threatened with termination twice in the last two months. Why?

Because I have questioned the training that I and all the other employees in my division have been subjected to while working remotely for the State in 2021. Employees were excited to find out that a large sum of funding had been set aside for career-focused training and development by our department. However, the State instead instituted mandatory “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” training in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, where I work as an adult vocational rehabilitation counselor. The mandatory trainings total 15 hours. The trainings are actually “struggle sessions” in which state employees are intimidated and humiliated in order to be indoctrinated into a new orthodoxy which is racist, sexist, and anti-American, but are presented by the facilitators as unquestioned truth.

Employees are repeatedly required to express their innermost emotions and personal information. The speaker, Mirna Valerio, told us at the beginning of the sessions that we must practice “critical humility” and “vulnerability” in order to do “the work”. Ms. Valerio defined “the work” as “dismantling all kinds of isms, including white supremacy from which all kinds of isms are derived”, and dismantling “advantage and disadvantage based solely on skin color”. The first thing we were required to do at the sessions was to tell Ms. Valerio how we were feeling “emotionally and physically.” This requirement was repeated multiple times during the trainings. However, Ms. Valerio told us, “I do not take questions. It serves to derail the work.... questions are very self-serving, and sometimes people ask questions to stop the progress of the group.”

Ms. Valerio required us to share our feelings about whiteness, white supremacy and white privilege. People responded with feelings of guilt and shame. Ms. Valerio encouraged those feelings. She told us to “sit with the discomfort”.

Ms. Valerio told us the United States is a country of “systemic and structural racism”. She lectured us on “microaggressions” and “cultural appropriation”. She made it clear several times that “color blindness” is racist.

Everything in our society, according to Ms. Valerio, must be seen through the prism of race. She told us that the “nuclear family” was something that was “pushed on us” by the white power structure, and even BMI (body mass index) used by the medical profession is racist, because “corpulence” is associated with “African savages”.

The most distressing part of her training was her degrading of black Americans. The only black Americans she mentioned during the entire trainings were those who were involved in police shootings. She never spoke of outstanding black Americans—except for one: Candace Owens. She said that Ms. Owens was guilty of “internalized racism” because she doesn’t agree with Ms. Valerio’s ideology.

Ms. Valerio did not stop there. She said that “the work” “comes under the umbrella of social justice.” She defined “social justice” as follows:

“Meets all of their needs as human beings in which resources are equitably distributed and ecologically sustainable.”

Sound familiar? Merriam Webster dictionary defines communism as:

“A system in which goods ...are available to all as needed...A final stage of society...in which economic goods are distributed equitably.”

Ms. Valerio made it clear that white Americans, especially white American males, are white supremacists, unless they become “antiracists”. How does that occur? Ms. Valerio gave us marching orders:

‘She said we must talk about racism and race repeatedly. We must analyze our circle of friends, and talk with our families at the dinner table. We must give money and time to the cause, be active at a political level in local and state politics. We must constantly check our own behavior.’

This is not the end. We have been told the next step is an “equity audit”. An equity audit, according to the Racial Equity Group, includes an “institution-wide assessment that scores level of commitment to racial equity.” It calculates an “inclusion score that measures employee level of belonging in the work environment”. The score is based on a continuum where “color blind” is lowest, and “committed” to promoting racial equity is highest. The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly stated that our constitution is “color blind”. Under this logic, dismantling white supremacy includes dismantling our color blind constitution.

Vermont state employees are going to be subjected to evaluations based on their commitment to this destructive ideology. This is an anti-American, racist and sexist ideology. It is my belief that this cannot continue to be tolerated in our democratic society.

Biography:

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